

## LEGIONARY DEVOTION TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

By Rev. Francis Lendacky

In the quote that follows the LEGIONARY PROMISE (Pgs 90-92 in the Handbook) we read these words extracted from the Minutes of the 88th Meeting of the Concilium: "...the proposed form of promise would be in conformity with Legionary devotion as pictured by the Standard, which shows the Dove presiding over the Legion and its work, through Mary, for souls."

Years after the founding of the Legion of Mary, there must have been discussion about the formulation of what was to become known as the Legionary Promise. One question was to whom the Promise should be addressed. The answer was the Holy Spirit. Realizing that the first corporate prayer of those pioneering Legionaries-to-be had been the invocation to the Holy Spirit, the Legionaries at the Concilium considered the answer a heavenly endorsement. Present-day Legionaries sometimes fail even to notice. Surely, Legionaries beseech the Holy Spirit constantly in their Legionary lives, but perhaps they neglect to avail themselves of the power of the Holy Spirit.

Legionaries believe that the Holy Spirit is the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity. He is the personified Love between Father and Son. As the CATECHISM states: to believe in the Holy Spirit is to profess that the Holy Spirit is one of the persons of the Holy Trinity, -consubstantial with the Father and the Son. In the PREFACE of the Mass on Trinity Sunday the Church proclaims: "...faith in the mystery of your Godhead. You have revealed your glory as the glory also of your Son and of the Holy Spirit: three persons equal in majesty, undivided in splendor, yet one Lord, One God, ever to be adored in your everlasting glory." But perhaps, for all we Legionaries know about the Holy Spirit, we do not let Him work in us or through us as He would wish to work for souls.

Legionaries should be aware of at least four levels of union with the Holy Spirit. And to be complete apostles for the Gospel, Legionaries should cultivate that union with the Holy Spirit on all four levels.

The first level of union is Sacramental. The Baptized and Confirmed Legionary enjoys a grace-full union with the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity. This union designates the Legionary as a temple of the Holy Spirit and a soldier for Christ. This sacramentally administered union is fundamental, and once it exists, it remains indelibly sealed upon the soul.

The Catholic Christian is additionally aware that this sacramental 'union effects a relationship with Mary, the Spouse of the Holy Spirit. Since the Spirit and His Spouse are inseparably united in the 'Divine Economy of Redemption,' Mary is also inherent in the soul of every soldier for Christ. She is ready 'to mother' that soul into a more

perfect image of Her First Begotten Son conceived by the Spirit, born from Her Inviolable Womb.

When the Legionary consecrates himself in True Devotion to Mary and fosters within himself Legionary Devotion to Mary, he establishes yet another level of union with the Holy Spirit. This level is a voluntary surrender of the Legionary to the Holy Spirit in the ranks of Mary's Legion. The more this surrender approaches total dimension, the more the radiance of the Legionary becomes manifest (as we are reminded in the prayer for the canonization of Venerable Edel Quinn). This level enables the Legionary to be energized beyond his obvious creaturely limitations. In the words of the Legionary Promise, Her heart and the Legionary's are one, and from that single heart she speaks again those words of old: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord;" And Once again you (Holy Spirit) come by her to do great things.

At the weekly Praesidium Meeting, the Legionary invokes the Holy Spirit in the opening prayer. That invocation alone can make us aware that we Legionaries are assembled in some special Mystical Home and are assembled for an exercise which has spiritual ingredients and spiritual effects. The Legionaries realize His presence; they recognize the works which He has accomplished through the efforts of fellow-Legionaries. But if we discern honestly, we may become aware that, because we employ our own feeble talents rather than the inexhaustible Power of the Divine Spirit, we report fragile results rather than an abundant harvest. We seldom succeed in increasing the Kingdom of God's inventory.

In those three levels of union mentioned, we Legionaries are easily convinced of the presence of the Spirit in our personal lives, in our prayers, in our Legion meetings. But in the fourth level of union-in the actual performance of our Legionary assignments (where we must cooperate with the Holy Spirit most especially), we Legionaries must leave ourselves open to some serious self-scrutiny. Do we really allow the Holy Spirit and His Spouse to exercise full power in our Legionary assignments?

We should ask ourselves whether we have been content to remain in 'upper room safety' rather than 'break out into the babbling market place!' Have we remained cloistered within our own fears and timidities? Have we been incarcerated by the intimidations, real or fancied, of external circumstances? Or suspecting something devilishly sinister and subtle, have we allowed those intimidations to become dinosaurs of Jurassic proportions and forgotten the promise of the Spirit's protection in His work!

Perhaps it will be observed that Legionaries are prohibited by others from venturing into the highways and byways of certain parishes. Perhaps excuses will be made that the qualified personnel for heroic work is not available. But how many times do these excuses fall upon ears relieved to hear them? How many restrictions are once-meant, but never-rent.

Perhaps someone will remind us that Legionaries who volunteer gladly for Peregrinatio Projects are exercising an heroic degree of willingness. But is it not also evident that many Legionaries will readily volunteer for work 'away from home' for two weeks or so, rather than volunteer for challenging assignments 'around their home' for the remainder of the year? Maybe the Legionary feels that the Holy Spirit is more likely to be present on Peregrinatio, but would not be interested enough to work near home.

From this perspective, it may be quite a significant challenge when we use the rather folksy quote: 'Charity begins at home!' For many of us that place we call our neighborhood 'home' or our 'home parish' may be forbidding.

It is reasonable to presume that the most influential servants of a 'home' are the ones who live in that home. Legionaries live in parish homes which may be really, or relatively, dangerous. But the Holy Spirit has no fear of deserted domiciles or barricaded ruins. And the Holy Spirit is not prone to evacuate any place for any reason except inhospitality. And even then, He can not leave altogether, for it would bring about a spiritual vacuum. The result would be annihilation.

If we Legionaries believe in the gift of Fortitude, if we Legionaries applaud 'Legionary courage,' then we must believe that the Holy Spirit does not condone despair, nor does He foster timidity. The Legionary must cultivate, above all, that fourth level of union with the Spirit. He must dare to become so deeply one with the Spirit that he will allow himself to be used by the Spirit in the manner in which He wishes to use us. We must not merely pray in His Presence, we must be courageous enough to let Him and His Immaculate Spouse Us do their work through us for the salvation of souls in precise and proper Legion practice. Legionaries must dare to make the words of their Promise come alive in their -service. Then perhaps, by the grace of God, we will be able to change the homes we live in and the homes we enter into, and will not forestall the invasion by the Holy Spirit into the hearts of men and women which He desires to call His Home!